

gentlewoman from California [Ms. LOFGREN].

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make a brief comment because of the tenor of this discussion.

As someone who has reached a conclusion that there are occasions when capital punishment is appropriate, I am aware that other people have reached a different conclusion. I can respect those people. And this is a first time as a Member of this body that I have heard this discussion without the implication that those who have reached a different conclusion are somehow less concerned about crime or less opposed to wrongdoing. I wanted to note that and thank the gentleman from Tennessee for understanding that we can have different beliefs and yet be united in opposition to crime.

□ 1730

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. JENKINS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1348, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 1757, FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 1998 AND 1999, AND EUROPEAN SECURITY ACT OF 1997

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on International Relations, pursuant to House Rule XX, I move to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1757) to consolidate international affairs agencies, to authorize appropriations for the Department of State and related agencies for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and to ensure that the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] proceeds in a manner consistent with United States interests, to strengthen relations between the United States and Russia, to preserve the prerogatives of the Congress with respect to certain arms control agreements, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees:

For consideration of the House bill (except title XXI) and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. GILMAN, GOODLING, LEACH, HYDE, BEREUTER, SMITH (NJ), HAMILTON, GEJDENSON, LANTOS, and BERMAN.

For consideration of title XXI of the House bill, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. GILMAN, HYDE, SMITH (NJ), HAMILTON, and GEJDENSON.

There was no objection.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days on which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill (H.R. 2209) making appropriations for the legislative branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material and charts therein.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. BALLENGER]. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. BALLENGER]. Pursuant to House Resolution 197 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for consideration of the bill, H.R. 2209.

□ 1733

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2209) making appropriations for the legislative branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, with Mr. LAHOOD in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. WALSH] and the gentleman from New York [Mr. SERRANO] each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Mr. WALSH].

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to bring to the floor H.R. 2209, the fiscal year 1998 legislative appropriations bill. This is the first year I have had the pleasure of chairing this subcommittee.

The gentleman from California [Mr. PACKARD], the former chairman of the subcommittee, has set a very high standard for us to follow. I want to recognize the members of the Subcommittee on Legislative who have assisted me in bringing this bill to the floor.

First, let me thank the gentleman from California [Mr. CUNNINGHAM], the vice-chairman of the subcommittee. In addition, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. YOUNG], the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. WAMP], and the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LATHAM] all have contributed to the work on this bill.

My colleague and good friend, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SERRANO], the other part of New York, downstate New York, is the ranking minority member. He is a great friend and has worked with me on a bipartisan basis throughout the process.

In addition, the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO] and the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] have helped shape this bill and have maintained the bipartisan spirit of the subcommittee. Also, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY], the ranking minority member of the full committee, have fully participated in the subcommittee's deliberations.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 2209 provides \$1,711,417,000 in new budget authority. This bill is \$10 million below the 1997 bill. If I could repeat that, it is 0.6 percent lower than last year's appropriation, Senate excluded. This continues a 3-year trend of making the legislative branch smaller and indeed leading the way toward smaller government.

The Congressional Research Service, in consultation with the Congressional Budget Office, has calculated that if the entire Federal budget were to be reduced in the same proportion as we have downsized the legislative branch, the entire Federal budget would show a surplus of \$183 billion for fiscal year 1998.

Here are a few general points about the bill:

We have continued the program begun in the 104th Congress to right-size the legislative branch. This is producing a more efficient, smaller work force by using technology wherever possible. The bill does not fund certain personnel costs, such as within-grade, promotion or merit pay increases. Legislative agencies will absorb these costs, just as the executive branch does.

The legislative branch work force is cut by an additional 316 positions. Since 1994, we have reduced FTE's, or full time equivalent positions, by over 3,800 positions. That is a reduction of almost 14 percent of the entire legislative branch work force. The FTE cut does not reduce agency programs. The current level of FTE's used by agencies has been maintained. However, funds for unused FTE's have been removed.

Some of the details in the bill include:

For the House of Representatives, \$708 million is provided. The Members' representational allowance appropriation has been increased to cover staff cost of living allowances. Committee funds have been increased by \$6.7 million and are extended through December 31, 1998. House administrative offices, the Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, CAO, and others are funded at a net reduction of \$2 million. Within the CAO, HIR operational costs are reduced \$1.6 million.